

There are some people who just don't like to take "yes" for an answer.

Take, for example, some of my Republican colleagues who have spent the past two months stomping and stampeding for a bill to allow drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf, and then reject it when it is presented to them.

Oh, I know - the Democratic compromise isn't perfect. It doesn't give the Republicans one hundred percent of what they want. But, it is a product of compromise and consensus. And I think the American people are sick and tired of Members of Congress who pull so hard to the extremes that the country doesn't move forward.

The Democratic bill that passed the House this week permits drilling fifty miles offshore with state approval, and one hundred miles offshore without state approval. In return, it repeals tax subsidies to big oil and compels oil companies to pay royalties on flawed leases from the late 1990s, and puts those funds into renewable energy investments (in contrast, the Bush Administration sought to slash total energy efficiency and renewable energy budgets by over \$450 million this year). And, it requires utility companies to generate 15 percent of electricity from renewable sources – such as wind power, biomass, wave, tidal, geothermal and solar -- by 2020.

Frankly, there are things I don't like about the bill. Even President Bush's own Department of Energy has stated publicly that drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf won't achieve any consumer price reduction until the year 2030 – and then an average of about 2 cents a gallon. And, I don't think that the solution to fossil-fueled global warming is more fossil fuels.

But I recognize that a complicated and complex energy issue won't be solved by throwing sound bites at each other. And some people certainly won't let facts get in the way of some good political rhetoric. So I swallowed hard, and to the Republican chant of "drill, baby, drill," I joined my colleagues in supporting reasonable and responsible conditions for expanded drilling.

The response? "It's not enough."

Huh?

They demanded that we lift prohibitions on offshore drilling and we did it.

Now they're saying a fifty mile exclusion is too much. They want oil derricks to be within three miles of a shoreline. Three miles.

And if we said three, my guess is they'd reject that for a mile and half.

It sounds to me like the Republican insistence to drill was never about drilling. It was about finding a bumper sticker to take into the upcoming elections. It wasn't about producing more

domestic energy, it was about producing more press releases.